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DPU Approves Expanded Utility-Run Energy Efficiency Programs

Up to 8,000 additional customers could save as much as \$40 a month through enhanced efficiency programs offered by electric and natural gas utilities

BOSTON – Preparing for high heating costs this winter, the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) today approved utility companies' plans to expand energy efficiency programs by \$5.9 million, allowing them to serve up to 8,000 more electric and natural gas customers across Massachusetts. Customers who participate in these programs stand to save up to \$40 on their monthly utility bills as a result of energy efficiency investments.

Consistent with the Green Communities Act, which was signed into law by Governor Deval Patrick in July, the DPU required all Massachusetts natural gas and electric utilities to submit proposals detailing plans to increase spending for residential energy efficiency programs during the 2008 heating season. The agency today approved expanded energy efficiency plans proposed by NSTAR (electric and gas), Cape Light Compact, Fitchburg Gas and Electric Light Co., The Berkshire Gas Co., New England Gas Company, Bay State Gas Company, and National Grid (electric). The DPU previously approved increased funding for National Grid's gas energy efficiency programs through a separate proceeding, and a proposal recently filed by Western Massachusetts Electric Co. is still under DPU review.

"By ramping up funding for energy efficiency across the state, today's DPU decision is good news for the Commonwealth as a whole – but especially for the thousands of additional households who will save money not just this winter, but for years to come, with the help of utility-funded investments to make their homes and heating systems more fuel-efficient," DPU Chairman Paul Hibbard said.

As a result of today's decision, as many as 7,000 more customers will be served by the electric companies' energy efficiency programs this winter. Increased utility funding of \$4.5 million for the 2008 winter season will go toward efforts such as the Residential Conservation Service

(RCS)/MassSAVE program, residential multi-family program, low-income new construction program, and the low-income single family and multi-family programs. Participating electric customers are expected to save between \$7 and \$40 on their monthly bills.

Gas utilities will add up to 1,000 more customers to existing energy efficiency programs, increasing funding by approximately \$1.4 million statewide for residential high efficiency heating rebates, residential high efficiency water heating rebates, the ENERGY STAR homes and windows programs, ENERGY STAR thermostats, and residential weatherization and low-income programs. Each customer who participates is expected to save between \$15 and \$30 a month.

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